Letter No. 91. Sunday. Feb 8th

Major J. H. Massey.
6. Palestinian Coy. The Buffs.
M. E. F.

My darling Sweet Barbara.

I do hope that you are not having any more of those frightful lapses in my letters. In any case, you know that the fault is not mine; perhaps that helps a little bit. For no. 4 of Dec 7th came today, & was awfully unhappy because you had had no letter for 4-5 weeks, & you had just had an A.F. to tell you there was no news, which merely exasperated you. But darling, in case you understood that it was only a case of no news since the last A.F., both of which had been written weeks after all the letters which you should have had, but had not. Today I promptly composed a long cable which would have cost about 10/-, & then realised in time that I had had about 8 A.F.s & p.c.s from you written since Dec 7th, telling me all the things which you wanted to know, so my cable would only be wasted, & I saved 9/-.

But I shall probably write another one tomorrow, to clear up a few points. Your birthday cable arrived yesterday, thank you very much my sweetheart. It was lovely to have it. But you were still in suspense about my posting home. My A.F.s surely must have arrived by now, but I will make sure & cable tomorrow. Darling one, if & when I do get posted home, & in any case when I come home, I shall want you to know about it as soon as ever possible, & I shall be wanting to meet you at the earliest possible moment after I set foot on English soil. And so, I shall be very efficient, leave no stone unturned to ensure these things. I shall write you an Air Mail letter, an Air Mail letter Card, &

an Autograph – & of course, I shall cable you. And if there is no time for me to get your reply, Ben-Ami will open it when it comes. And if it does not come, he will cable you himself & he will go on cabling you until he has your reply & has actually had your confirmation that you have received all news & instructions. I shall leave him £5 for this very purpose, & such changes as there may be. He will buy silk stockings & send them on to us (size 9½). I am terribly sorry that you have had all this expense, my darling – it is because of those unreliable mails. I thought that I had arranged things so that the first word you heard would be that I had tried & failed. Then the details would arrive later. Poor darling – me too. Can you imagine my own state? The military mails arrive four times a day, & so for weeks I was on edge four times a day, which in effect means all day. And now I am awaiting the new opportunity – also four times a day! But I am quite certain that I prefer to have a glimmer of hope such as this than just to chafe & fret with nothing to look forward to in the way of hope, but the end of the war.

And now, darling sweety, I must give you a lecture & a talking to about money. You sent me on the bank sheet for November, which started off with + £16 & finished with + £19 – in other words £3 in one short month. You were afraid of the impending income tax & saw us overdrawn again. And in Nov. there were £20 for

me on the 5th & again on the 11th from which you deducted three-hoon. You must take everything into account first of all, the dates of my £20 on Martins Bank sheet means nothing at all, except the date on which my cheque on Barclays arrives in Bradford, having come by sea mail. So that the £16-4 is a false figure & should be less. As things were, the first £20 was drawn by me on Aug 15th, the second one on Sept 27th — & then the next one after that on Jan 19th. So instead of £60 in 6 days, it is really £60 in 5 months — & actually longer than that, as on Aug 15th I was £12 overdrawn.
You can rely on my spending, now that I am on field Allowance again, not to exceed £15 per month, & in actual fact, it will probably be £10.
And darling, on the bank sheet, you failed to consider that Aug Pay had not come in, & this together with B.C.W. pay being £17 down, & the £7 Tanya owed on the R.I. bill, & £2-3-4 for life insurance (which is money saved) makes a difference of £77. Or only £7 down, in spite of £60 of mine having landed in one month.
Which makes a deal of difference, ?
I have worked out how much we should have in the bank on March 21st or about when this letter reaches you. My Jan £20 should have landed by then, & will certainly last me until after then — & Aug Pay ~~+ £2 × £8 - £8 + one £2-3-4~~ + B.C.W. pay at £9-9-8 a month — less £2 a month for you, less 2 × £8-18 & one £2-3-4 insurance: & add the £7 from Tanya — & I shall

probably still have £10 in the bank here – the result is + £230. Now, Income Tax has been coming off Army Pay: it is now coming off R.C.A.F. pay, so I do not see how it can be more than another £120 (though I admit I am quite lost about it). And our financial position should then be as follows:–

In the Bank	£100.
Defence Bonds:	£240.
R.C.A.F. shares.	£65.
Ocean Accident & Guarantee insurance.	£218 – paid since Dec. 35
Canada Life insurance.	£90 – paid since 1932.
Total	£713.

So that looks better, doesn't it, darling? Let me give you three rules of advice, for when you look at the bank sheet. ① Don't what has still to be paid. ② Don't be misled by my £30, their dates, & remember, when I draw £30 I have them for that must be credited in the bank. & it will probably last 3 months. If ever I do have an expensive leave or suchlike, I shall certainly tell you. ③ Remember that insurance is money saved; & so, in a way, is income tax deducted at source.

And now I must go to bed. Goodnight, my sweet-lovely darling. X X.

Monday Feb 9th. And your birthday, angel sweetheart. I have written an A.L. today & I sent you an E.F.M. cable last week. We have many anniversaries, happy & sad ones, & from so far away & when letters take so long, it is difficult to take proper notice of them all. But your birthday is

undoubtedly a happy one - & yet, if you stop to think about it, I can imagine you feeling unhappy, thinking - so that I were away. & now 32, & still no sign of me coming home. But it is a bit like the book sheet, & you have to look properly at the beginning & end, & instead of being 3 years, it is 16 months. But I hope anyway, that you do not think of yourself in terms of years of age, as ever really think, as you said in one letter, that you will be an old maid before I come home. Don't ever think any of those things, my beautiful darling. It is a tragedy which I shall never get over or forgive, that we have been kept apart during these last months & still can see no real end of it. But, we have had our lovely, glorious years - passionately happy, passionate years - & we have completely defied the people who say that passion dies after a few months. How many people, darling, who after having been lovers for seven years (& really is as long as that) can still be faithful as we are & look forward to each other even more passionately than we did seven years ago. Because that is the way I think of you, my darling sweetheart. Because you are so adorably sweet & lovely & beautiful & pretty - & every little thing about you is perfect & more than perfect — all your face & your lips & mouth & your eyes - & all your body & your darling arms & breasts & legs, & your sweet soft feet which I love & adore so much. And because you love me in the same way & we love & long to love each other in the same way. Oh, sweetest heart, what a wife you are - & what a lover & mistress you are. These are all the things where truth is important, my darling, & in them I feel sexually truthful, & in these you do too. I have been thinking about all this very particularly,

passionate things we do - & what will happen when we get much older; shall we stop, & will it be you or me who is offended that when we do stop. And I have decided that we shall never stop - only that we may become more gentle & perhaps a little less ardent. Don't you feel that too, my darling?

Tuesday - Feb 10th. I couldn't write any more last night, darling - I sat here for nearly two hours, thinking about you & about us, & gazing at your big photographs, & looking through my album of snaps which you have sent me, & reading some of your letters. I can sit & think about you for hours, easily - I only wish I had more time to do it.

I am very busy at the moment - & I have just done a thing which may easily make me even busier in the near future. I have written, on Sunday, a personal & confidential letter to a R.A.F. Squadron Leader - which is the equivalent rank to a Major - telling him, in so many words, that he is inefficient, ineffectual & useless, & that if he did not give me a satisfactory reply by this morning, I would take the matter up with the Area Commander. Nothing happened by this morning, so off I went & laid my letter before the Brigade Major. He was shocked to the core & just about fainted, as well as chortling with laughter, & said I should not write letters like that without seeing him first. I told him I did not want to get the man into trouble behind his back. I then was taken in to see the A.C. - he was impressed & sympathetic & most agreeable, & has asked me to write him a private letter, which he will pass on to the General. So now I am wide open for a counter attack. You cannot tell me that I do

not fuck myself! – because quite apart from my perfectly sincere & righteous feelings in this case, I also hope that it may do me some good, & maybe I shall be taken note of & recommended for a Lt-Cols appointment – or else sent home in disgrace.

I must now really tell you about the Coy anniversary of last Friday – otherwise other things will intervene & it will become dim, & the story will never be told.

About 150 of the men's wives & girl friends & families came. Col. Leicester was the guest of honour, as it were – & my invitation was also accepted by the Hendons & his wife, & Edwin Samuel & his wife & various other notables about whom you have not heard. We kicked off at 2-30 pm with a full Coy parade & inspection by Col L. & march past. The Coy was really steellers & did me great credit, & were much admired by those who knows & also those who do not. I was also bloody smart myself & was hanging my feet down for it but. Even the officers were good as a result of my having a Sat'ns parade every day for a week & giving them the works.

After this, we had a Boxing fighting display – 2 a-side armed & unarmed men fighting each other. And then the great football match against the P.R.T.D. It was a v. good game & we were beaten 3-2 which was not bad, considering that the Depot is about 6 times our strength. At half time there was a P.T. display – & at the end of the game the R.A.F. gave a display of low flying attacks. I held my hands up one time & the R.A.F. officer recognised

me & came so low. I had to duck down to avoid being struck. They really are crackers these young pilots that ended the sports & parades - & music & dancing & food & drink followed. These took place in the dining hall & one of the barrack rooms which had been cleared for the occasion - both large dreary places on exactly the same pattern as my own room, which I have described to you - but a number of the men had made a really fine job of decorating them with greens from a nearby forest & wild flowers, the Coy's name printed up, the Royal Arms, & blankets hung over the rather dilapidated black out screens. Pity Band started off & played like hell for 2 hours from 5-7. We had lots of cakes & sweets & fruit, all the cooks & a few extra helpers had stayed up until after midnight the previous night making meat pies & sausage rolls & jam puffies - & another party had been up at 5.0 am cutting sandwiches. And the Welfare Committee did it quite proud with wine. The men & their girls all danced & sang & enjoyed themselves - & I beamed about the place.

By this time all the soldiers had left, except Mrs Samuel - the Hon Edwin having to go & give a lecture somewhere, about colonisation in Palestine. I had a long talk with her in the Mess, mostly about you coming out here, darling - I now know just how hopeless it is. Her trip to London has never come off, because she just cannot get there - in spite of having tried very hard. (And Ben-Ammi trip never came off either). She told me that Dr Weizmann had been very anxious to come to Palestine, &

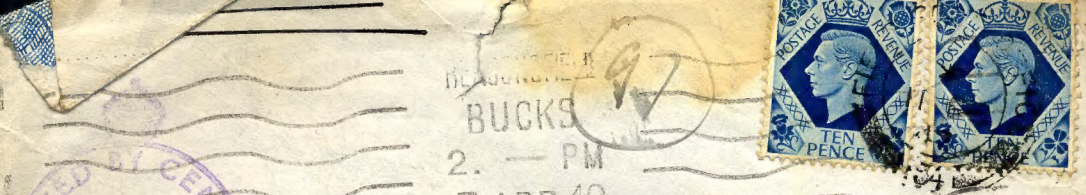
Churchill wanted him to come – but he wanted me to come without his wife, & they just wanted me to give her priority for a seat in a 'plane. So that really made me feel that further effort at the moment is useless. Which you & I had pretty well felt already, I'm afraid. She agreed that the sea trip is out of the question just now & much too dangerous. Oh dear! We then went into the concert, which began at 8.0. It was not particularly good, but everybody seemed to enjoy it. There is nothing to tell you about it. Except that at half time I made a speech – welcoming the guests & congratulating the Coy. I told the guests that I was afraid that they must think of me as that bad man who stopped the merchant men from coming on leave, which raised a good laugh. I then told the Coy a few things: I finally told them that I felt very proud of them & of my command. They gave me a tremendous cheer indeed, which was very good of them. And then they gave me three cheers, which gave me quite a lump in my throat.

It was really an excellent day – the men enjoyed it to the utmost – which was the most important thing. I'm sending on the photo of me to Peter – the other bigger one I sent by sea mail. & I've not had word of this one the other day, so thought it might arrive first, by air mail. Some photographs were taken last Friday, so that should be some more to send to you my darling. I wish I could send myself.

Another thing about money – I am conducting a case on my own behalf. For a change, to get my

Marjorie dated back to Jan 9th when I first commanded the Coy, instead of March 10th. Col. L. replied to my letter I said no - so I promptly replied to him I said I will resigned if he will said no, I should like to see him, if that did no good, I should go & see the Military Secretary. This date business has always rankled with me, & now I feel browned off about it, I am going to do my best to let it rip. And not to be annoyed at, at all.

I am going to try very hard to go to Jerusalem this week end - Sherlock has asked me for lunch, Mrs Samuels for dinner - & in any case I must see Jerusalem - Bethlehem before I get much older. It is extraordinary the way I never leave this country. Perhaps Bea will come with me, if I go. His promotion confirmation has still to come through - he is dreadfully anxious to get the extra one up. I'm afraid I have not replied to your letter very much darling - but I will do in my next one. Though really, replying is a funny business, as it takes six months, by which time we have forgotten what it was all about. When anything is urgent for a reply, I always write on A.F. I will stop now - that is another day over & nearer to coming home to you darling sweetheart - it is all I really think of - & it is certainly all that really matters. I do not care a damn for anything or anybody else. And please tell Marjorie that I am longing to see him & teach him to walk - talk. All of my love Barbara & Love and xxx H.



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